

MINUTES
MEANS WOODS TRUSTEES MEETING
20 December 2018
Middlebury Town Offices

MINUTES: MEANS WOODS TRUSTEES meeting 20 December 2018 8:30 a.m.
Middlebury Town Offices.

PRESENT: Norm Bloom, Brian Carpenter, Jamie Montague, John Murphy, Mark Spritzer
ABSENT: Cindy Hill

AGENDA:

1. Additions or amendments to Agenda

Norm noticed that there has been a tarp up in the woods recently. Jamie indicated that this was being used by an Aurora school group coordinated with MALT and that it would be taken down soon. This led to a discussion of the need to put up some signs reminding visitors to remove any materials that they bring into the woods. Jamie stated that she will look into creating some “leave no trace” signs.

2. Discussion and draft budget and annual report

- It was agreed that without the surveying expense, the proposed budget seems reasonable. Jamie stated that searching for the old metal survey pins would be a good job for a summer intern at MALT.
- Brian stated that we are late in the budgeting process to put in any new requests for funds this year. We can ask for funds, but Brian thought it was unlikely that we would receive an increase above the \$300 that we are normally allotted. It was agreed that we should use the \$300 designated for the current fiscal year to get as much done as possible. It was also agreed that getting mesh on the slippery footbridge should be the highest priority. After some discussion, it was decided that the proposed budget should be submitted as a way of at least justifying the \$300 that we are regularly allotted and possibly getting additional funds from the town.
- Jamie indicated that a topic of discussion at the Town Forest Planning meeting was the problem of how best to organize projects involving town forests. MALT can be a driver to get work done, but this arrangement needs to be formalized. Formal agreements with the town are needed. Brian agreed that it would be good to bring all the stakeholders together to develop of strategic plan. Jamie stated that a next step will be to get organized and create a master “bike-ped” plan.
- The draft annual report was briefly discussed, with a number of additions suggested.

3. Agree upon language or items to be added to MALT kiosk.

It was agreed that the proposed language submitted by Mark is good, with some minor editing. Jamie asked where we might be able to find some relevant pictures. It was suggested that the Sheldon Museum might have something.

4. Discuss proposed Town Policy for Old Town Road legal trail

- There is a “town trail” on the east boundary of Means Woods, so we need to determine what the regulations are regarding town trails. Cindy has been working on legal language regarding this issue, and it was agreed that we’ll need to discuss this topic at a later meeting that she can attend.
- Brian argued against restricting the trail to the neighboring land owner, and suggested that we need more background information to understand if the landowner is causing any problems through the occasional use of the trail. There is currently only one land owner, so it seems unnecessary to over-work this issue.
- John and Mark expressed concern about the potential for future heavy use of the trail as a road by private land owners. Should we exclude logging and sugaring from along the road? Does the land owner currently have a key to the gate? It was unclear who controls keys to the gate.
- Jamie indicated that when a road becomes a trail, “right-of-way” no longer exists. She also indicated that there are few parts of the TAM without “easement” and it should be a goal to obtain easement for the entire TAM. Brian agreed that a draft easement should be created for the TAM to formalize what is now casual agreements. This would define responsibilities for shared use and prevent development.
- John suggested that the right-of-way needs to be more clearly defined, perhaps creating language that gives the landowner restricted access to the trail.

5. Updates and discussion of Town/MALT/Means Woods MOU

Jamie reported that she is working with others to develop a list of responsibilities for MALT. Brian indicated that there is a need for common language for the use of both Battel and Means Woods. It was agreed that the Board of Trustees is responsible for “governance”, whereas MALT could be responsible for “management” of at least parts of the woods.

6. No additional business was discussed.

Next meeting scheduled for 8:30 a.m. on May 23, after the walk through of the woods on May 18.

Meeting Adjourned at 9:43 a.m.